



News Release

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Substance Abuse, Mental Health Facilities Going Tobacco Free

(SALT LAKE CITY) By the year 2012, all publicly-funded substance abuse and mental health facilities across Utah will have to go smoke-free. Some facilities are ahead of the game, phasing out smoking on campus with the help of a three-year wellness initiative called Recovery Plus. At a news conference today, the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) and Department of Human Services Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAHM) announced the move is about more than just getting tobacco smoke out of buildings.

“Studies show that treating tobacco use along with drug or alcohol abuse increases recovery rates,” said UDOH Division of Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Robert Rolfs. “Many people have such severe problems that at times we forget that tobacco use kills more people than all those other so-called ‘serious’ drugs combined,” Rolfs added. “As clinicians, it’s our duty to treat all forms of addiction – knowing that we’re saving lives by doing so.”

The Recovery Plus program includes a comprehensive tobacco-free campus policy and integrates tobacco cessation into treatment protocols. The key is to have a holistic treatment plan for all patients in the facilities.

According to the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors, people with mental illness die 25 years earlier than the general population, largely due to conditions caused or worsened by smoking.

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Page 2 of 2: Substance Abuse, Mental Health Buildings Going Tobacco Free

“Patients who smoke and have a substance abuse problem can increase their recovery rates up to 25% when they receive treatment for substance abuse and smoking cessation simultaneously,” said Department of Human Services Director Palmer DePaulis.

“Treatment recommendations are clear: Nobody will be refused treatment based on tobacco use status, but if patients use tobacco and want to increase their chances of recovery, providing a tobacco-free environment will help more people recover and protect their health, too,” he said.

For more information, visit www.RecoveryPlus.Utah.Gov. For free help quitting tobacco, call the Utah Tobacco Quit Line at 1.800.QUIT.NOW or visit www.UtahQuitNet.com.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.

The Utah Department of Human Services (DHS) provides direct and contracted services to our most vulnerable children, families and adults.